



2



## Skin that Speaks: the "talking drums" of Nigeria | Michael Varner | TEDxUTA

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The Yoruba people have a fascinating family of musical instruments called talking drums that "speak" the language. Presented will be a newly composed work that combines the essence of the talking drum with European Amplified Bassoon making a unique combination and listening

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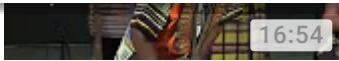
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**PandaTurtle** 1 year ago (edited)

I don't get why a White Man studying African culture is "sad" u should feel a sense of pride that some one chooses you`r culture to present



72



REPLY

Hide replies ^

**jihanjae** 1 year ago

PandaTurtle+ You DO realize that "sad" comment was made by a "white" supremacist, don't you?? Yet your silly response, presumes to be addressing an African!!!



1



REPLY

**John Louis** 1 year ago

jihanjae lol yeah idk why he don't realize that shit



REPLY

**Claudius Fanusie** 8 months ago

I am very happy that this academic studied the musical instruments from Nigeria to show the rest of the world..we need more of that



Nothing sad about It, this is a good thing



REPLY



**Leon Adeleye** 1 year ago

This is an exploration of instruments with the 'Talking Drum' - Gangan taking the centre stage. I applaud this man and his team for researching on Yoruba culture and for boldly presenting a musical piece on the Gangan drum. It must have taken them time to learn the culture let alone how to play the talking drum - for this I say thank you. The world is now a global village - it is only wise to encourage others to learn about your culture for preservation and continuity. A Big Well Done!



88



REPLY

Hide replies ^



**Green Greener** 1 year ago

You are an idiot. This is whack and you should never applaud a cracker for appropriating your culture dumb ass. Had it been a Nigerian who did the same for Irish culture do you think an Irish man would applaud him? Smdh some Africans are so gullible. And remember, their "exploration" led to colonialism, imperialism and slavery, dummy



5



REPLY



**FlerpyDerp** 1 year ago

You are quite ignorant and try to see racism where there is appreciation for culture. Leon is correct, and I appreciate his open-mindedness.



11



REPLY



**Leon Adeleye** 1 year ago (edited)

@ Green Greener - How sad! I can see that you haven't learn any pleasant ENGLISH words with all your years in mental racism imprisonment. I believe this has resulted in your inability to reason effectively or feel the love (Correct me if I am wrong).

Mr 'Green', if you can only look on your 'Greener' side, you will find that the man in the video couldn't have been the one who  
**Read more**



8



REPLY



**Leon Adeleye** 1 year ago

@flerpyDerp Thank you and God bless you as you spread the love.



Search



2



You have so much disdain for another color, yet you care to speak the language. If you carry so much true hatred, surely, you won't be left wanting when you forfeit any culture shared to the world in the opposite direction. Food is culture; abstain from "cracker" food, technology is culture; abstain from the gadgets, much music, clothing styles, in infinitum. Do you abstain from all of it? Culture is our lives and if you are not prepared to share your life, then truly alone in this world you will become. Unless you truly believe that one is greater or one should not exist, then no harm can be found in appropriation. The greatest achievement in this world is selflessness. Do you not agree?

**Show less** 3 **REPLY****Timothy Hamrick** 1 year ago

@Green Greener

**REPLY****DOUGLAS WHITFIELD** 1 year ago

Leon Adeleye I saw it on the game theorists

**REPLY****The Black Amour Magazine** 1 year ago

he is indeed an idiot, you find this with some Africans, as soon as a white man pays them a bit of attention they start to roll on the floor like a lapdog a Yoruba band without a single Yoruba person on it, interesting, and this guy could never get the talking drums by the way, you have to be steeped in Yoruba culture and especially Yoruba language to even begin to understand the drums, the drums speak in proverbs by the way so you can see how far away this joker is

 2 **REPLY****Zenme Yangzi** 1 year ago

Kkknnggrr, if you have a problem with cultural appropriation stop using English and take off your shoes.

 1 **REPLY****Makiba Uboke** 3 months ago

You don't know them like we do....they will take your culture and profit big off of it.

 1 **REPLY**



2



1



REPLY

**Kayode Nwanze** 1 year ago

This is full of good intentions. The cringe worthiness is not that he's trying to appropriate yoruba music, etc. it's the fact that he took out all the joy and improvisation of the actual music he's representing. Look at the four in the back, are they just doing this for a grade? lol. Anyone who's seen an actual yoruba ensemble knows that it's way more lively than this aka It's music for dancing! And writing sheet music for a talking drum? Come on man...



51



REPLY

Hide replies ^

**paapakobe** 1 year ago

I appreciate his 'privilege' in taking time off to go study, and share the info in a TED Talk, but I can't see any serious Yoruba drummer playing along to/ with this / that would at least give it more credibility.



1



REPLY

**Gretchen Francis** 10 months ago

especially because we are gentiles.



REPLY

**Gabriel Famuyiro** 6 months ago

Why say anything negative, let the man enjoy the culture.



REPLY

**el stupido** 6 months ago

I dont know , i think it would be great for it to be in sheet music and have it orchestrated. I think different kinds of music should be combined. It dosent always have to be traditional... This was cringey though.



1



REPLY

**Makiba Uboke** 3 months ago

I was thinking that it was kind of bland







2

**Gbenga Akande** 1 year ago

I wonder why we complain about everything. A foreigner came to learn from a different cultural background, just like the english language that we pay a lot to learn for many years, the question is do we ever speaks it exactly like a typical english man does? See this man is a world class music researcher and he has done a fusion style, the idea is to showcase the relevance of the dundun drum with other western instruments that could play a relevant role in an ensemble in a Call and Response manner mostly. Just see the exercise as a performance. In addition he was able to give a brief account about the drum. Now this is a cardinal challenge to all the omo onilu everywhere the need to come together and present the world a documentary on this unique traditional drum instrument. Consequently what this performer has done would be sampled and classified in keyboard synthesizers, other band keyboards and electronic drum machines and still sell it back to us uhhh! it is time to wake-up to reality of life and stop criticizing the foreigner's efforts.

**Show less** 12 **REPLY****View reply** ▾**Ayodele** 1 year ago

Perhaps the most depressing use of a talking drum I've ever seen, props to him for exploring cultures but as a Yoruba, the talking drum is a free flowing improvisational things not a rigid scientific instrument.

 30 **REPLY****Hide replies** ^**Prince Moses** 1 year ago

Exactly ..

**REPLY****Gretchen Francis** 10 months ago

exactly

**REPLY****Tournel Henry** 8 months ago

Why not do the research and come give a better presentation. Instead of sitting down and complaining about a European (whose culture involves putting everything into writing) who has put in so much effort to understand a culture that isn't his (as we African are too lazy to even read about our own history) and come to present it.



Search



2



Agreed. But what more could anything become through the hands of these insipid people, except it be rigid, overworked and completely removed from its original character?

👍 3 🗨️ REPLY



**Michael McGee** 5 months ago

Adam James Imaooooooooo

👍 🗨️ REPLY



**matt keyh** 1 year ago

I am Yoruba, My family is a drummer [idile ayan] You have to learn this trade from the age of 4 years upward until probably when you are 25 years when you graduate, you have to learn this drums unit by unit starting from the Omele or the talking drums it is very impossible to combine it with education, most people who are trained may not have an education or later have education in life. It is very hard to learn. My father forced me to learn it but I am more interested in education so it is impossible to combine it. Learning this drums would need you to attend very many traditional ceremonies like when a Yoruba king is being installed or installation of chiefs ceremonies like Agere, Oshun festivals, worshipping Orisa, Egungun festival, Ifa festivals, Obatala, Sango and Yemoja festivals etc. Every cities and villages have their Yoruba traditions. Most Juju musicians of Yoruba tribe of Nigeria like Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey, King Sunny Ade, Late IK Diare, Orlando Owo, Sir Shina Peters use these drums in their music. It took them years of training and they can not have higher education. This professor tried but it is nowhere near the original Yoruba drumming. The talking drums speak in Proverbs and idioms like [Adiye funfun lagba adiye awa lagba] people who want to appreciate this drumming should listen to Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey's music and King Sunny Ade. It takes years of training. It is an idile ayan or omo ibile tradition.

Show less

👍 6 🗨️ REPLY



**Frank Blangard** 2 years ago

The music begins at [9:51](#).

👍 26 🗨️ REPLY

Hide replies ^



**DumbDuck44** 2 years ago

It really doesn't though... the painful random sad noises start around then.

👍 6 🗨️ REPLY



2



language like yoruba isn't spoken you have to sing it so picking up the drum and learning it in a few days wont help, many families learn it exclusively as their profession and it takes at least 5 years of practice to become averagely good.

👍 3 🗨️ REPLY



**DumbDuck44** 2 years ago

This is the saddest most cringe-worthy thing I have seen on the internet, and I've been here since 1997.

👍 26 🗨️ REPLY

Hide replies ^



**Be Proud of your own** 1 year ago

DumbDuck44 Oh? Well, ur the one who is THE cringe worthy SADIST! Thank you.

👍 4 🗨️ REPLY



**Josh Q** 1 week ago

It's only because he's treating something that should be lively and free flowing like rocket science, they just aren't having enough fun playing

👍 🗨️ REPLY



**Carol Storm** 2 years ago

I lived in Iseyin, a small town in western Nigeria from 1965-67. It was the center of the bata talking drum and in two years I heard drumming-all night every night. And I loved it. I don't mean to be disrespectful to this presentation but it does not represent the music of the Yoruba. An "oyinbo" cannot do it, even with years of practice.

👍 39 🗨️ REPLY

Hide replies ^



**Tolani Idowu** 2 years ago

+Carol Storm

At least he tried and it wasn't a bad effort. A lot of us yoruba couldn't do what he did including me!

👍 10 🗨️ REPLY



**Carol Storm** 2 years ago



Search



2



the quality of drumming alone. I like the other videos I found on Youtube of modern Yoruba groups. I have the old music on

👍 1 🗨️ REPLY



**Tolani Idowu** 2 years ago

+Carol Storm I agree that in this particular case, the combination was not particularly clever. As for younger people taking up drumming, I would be the wrong person to comment. I left Naija quite a while ago and because i have never been into that kind of music, i guess a very small selection young people who are born into the trade may carry on the tradition, but very few. As for the songs you mention, again i have no idea, I was born in the UK and had to learn Yoruba quite late on so have never really got

👍 1 🗨️ REPLY



**Akindele Bankole** 2 years ago

+Tolani Idowu I direct you to my channel to listen to my Yoruba life cycle musical composition. Of course having grown up in 9ja myself, and later getting my degree in Western music in California, I have been able to incorporate our traditional sounds into the western classical genre. My goal is to help bring Yoruba tonality to the western musician. The style he composed is very much a 20th century atonal style. It is actually a good piece in its right, although I agree that it is an unfamiliar genre to many Nigerians.

👍 2 🗨️ REPLY



**Akindele Bankole** 2 years ago

I direct you to an amazing Oyinbo who actually did just that. In your YouTube search engine, type in 'Kayode Oyinbo', and get a beautiful surprise. Not only did Kayode play the bata drum well, he is pretty fluent in Yoruba, with excellent tonality and pronunciation. Enjoy!

👍 1 🗨️ REPLY



**Carol Storm** 2 years ago

+Akindele Bankole ~~Wow~~ in my two years there I could not speak even a fraction of what he knows. The Catholic priests in Iseyin could. The Protestant missionaries knew nothing.

👍 🗨️ REPLY



**Dabi Debo Kanyinsola** 2 years ago

+Carol Storm I commend this man for his efforts in putting our musical instruments on the pedestal. Albeit, an Oyinbo, he has done his utmost showcasing the instruments. Carol Storm, I am glad to know that you were in my home town. I believe that Africa is in whoever believes in its roots and culture. And the good thing is that, whatever is your culture, you must love music and imagine music devoid of drum. Lol....Remain blessed.



Search



2

**Carol Storm** 2 years ago

Is the Iseyin District Grammar School still there? My friends so long ago were Samson Alamu, Margaret Obafemi, Mr. Babalawu and Mr. GO Adesina. Do you know of them? The people of Iseyin were very good to me and gave me the name Aduke. My Muslim name was Ashake. Sorry not to know the spellings.



REPLY

**MajorrBison** 2 years ago

+Akindele Bankole oyinbo can never be like an Omo ibile unless born and raised Among the people, I know what o am talking about.



REPLY

**MajorrBison** 2 years ago

+Carol Storm ashake is not muslim name, it's a yoruba name.



2



REPLY

**Green Greener** 1 year ago

Stfu cracker, the fact that you lived in Iseyin dies not make you do e kind of expert. You crackers are always appropriate African ppl's culture and behaviour but you cracker should know that it does not belong to you and it never will. Stupid cracker, you will never be Yoruba



1



REPLY

**Carol Storm** 1 year ago

Sorry-I am not a cracker and you are not Yoruba. No Yoruba would speak to a teacher like that.

If you respect your town and your teachers I want you to apologize not to me but to someone who helped you when you were young.

Shame on you. Go make your life better by being kind.



7



REPLY

**Joshua Idowu** 1 year ago

Your comment is shameful and uncalled for!!



REPLY

**Joshua Idowu** 1 year ago



2

**7th Orisha** 1 year ago

Green Greener

Stfu there and learn how to respect others opinion without being so inane.

Her response should be seen as a compliment rather than the foolish way you chose to perceive it. She is absolutely correct as the deep literary concept and translation of Yoruba incantations can be very difficult for a foreigner to replicate!

**Show less**

2

**REPLY****Show more replies****Germaine Maxwell** 1 year ago

Hi

I am an Indian who loves playing African drums and I have been playing them from the age of six. I am now 72 and I think I am getting the hang of them, and the love I feel when doing so is plain to see. I too have a YouTube video (Magic Fingers Maxwell) playing different African drums in a unconventional way for which I apologise to the purists but you are only here on this planet once so why not try different things. Always enjoy what you do, unlike the poor boy in this video who looks like he is waiting to go into the dentists surgery, although I can sympathise with him. People always get caught up in the colour of skin. When I see a person from any part of the world I only see the person, colour or country never comes into it. My motto has always been "Strangers are only friends I haven't met yet". I was born in a palace and have spent eight years on the streets of England getting away from my family money and it is the best thing I have ever done (except for meeting my wife Germaine). Please give the man a break. My Grandfather always told me that even if you are right, if you lose your temper or become offensive you have lost.

**Show less**

4

**REPLY****Naomi Aden** 2 years ago

There was no passion put into this at all. Someone steal those drums away from this man.



20

**REPLY****Hide replies** ^**Ann Washington** 1 year ago

Naomi Aden yoo white people have no soul



Search



2

**Prince Moses** 1 year ago

haahahha Naomi you're right no passion in it at all, I'm a Nigerian and the way the Yoruba's plays it with much enthusiasm and passion is way different, but he tried tho, One who studys something and one who grew up with it should show certain differences.

He tried tho, people barely find the sound pleasant..... He play's like he isn't so sure ^\_^



3



REPLY

**Trent Beckman** 1 year ago

Ann Washington: As a white person, I can confirm.



REPLY

**Ketsia** 9 months ago

Oh please don't touch that talking drum again!



6



REPLY

**Martin Hriibek** 2 years ago

This sounds like bunch of 8 years old trying to jam on their 5th music class, when the teacher went to the toilet.



12



REPLY

Hide replies ^

**a duck** 8 months ago

It also kinda sounds like someone was messing around with a "music maker" where they just string some loops together and it ends up sounding incredibly disconnected.



REPLY

**Michael McGee** 5 months ago

Lmfaooiio these commenta



REPLY

**Benjamin fagbemi** 3 months ago

Martin Hriibek You are not vast in music

**segun paul** 1 month ago

You got me cracking up with this.



REPLY

**FroMaestro** 1 year ago

Dunno why there's so much venom in the comments. He did his best, he would've just been better advised to make Yoruba music. Bassoons and w/e this ensemble is attempting is so foreign to us. I don't recognize the drum. The fact that he doesn't speak Yoruba certainly doesn't help either. Good effort, sha.



3



REPLY

**forever young** 2 years ago (edited)

They are obsessed with black people. 😂😂😂😂😂. I'll always show this to the racists. I feel for y'all they got no culture ☺️🙄🙄🙄



21



REPLY

Hide replies ^

**Zannnnnah** 2 years ago

they tried it! SMH



REPLY

**Thomas Jaffray** 2 years ago

Imao ok



REPLY

**Its\_Ghost** 2 years ago

"they got no culture" please show your working out darling



REPLY

**forever young** 2 years ago

+Its\_Ghost what is it they have? Masquerade festivals? Native wears for different occasions? Talking drums? Maybe u can tell. U seem to know much about it.





2

**Ayodele** 1 year ago

Green Greener just because you are ignorant of it doesn't mean they don't have a culture



1



REPLY

**Green Greener** 1 year ago

What is ignorant about my comment? Do you know that black is not a race? It's your dumb , gullible ass who is ignorant. Like I said, Africans are not black, it's those slaves who are. Black is a culture



REPLY

**Green Greener** 1 year ago

We Africans sold those slaves they were not taken, maybe you should pick up a history book? We Africans in Africa are descendants of slave sellers, we are not slaves. You slave Americans descended from slaves and many of you have European blood and Native blood so why don't you slaves call yourself European or Native? You are not African and will never be African. I am African and will never bbe related to slaves. We Africans are not slaves don't try to put that slave ancestry on us



REPLY

**Ayodele** 1 year ago

Green Greener I actually meant the original comment was ignorant but your comments seem ignorant too



REPLY

**Ayodele** 1 year ago

Green Greener I'm African and I consider African Americans both in the north and south, and afro caribeans to be Africans regardless of any blood mixing.



2



REPLY

**Ayodele** 1 year ago

Green Greener to say every African is a descendant of slave sellers s ridiculous. so is saying blacks elsewhere are not true African.



2



REPLY

**Ayodele** 1 year ago

Green Greener it saddens me that there are more people with your mindset around



**Akindele Bankole** 2 years ago

As an FYI, often in formal music school, be instruments or ideas are introduced to the public in relation to other instruments to show it versatility. You might want to listen to it again from a different perspective.

4 [REPLY](#)



**Be Proud of your own** 1 year ago

Well done! How wonderful.

3 [REPLY](#)



**Mike S** 9 months ago

this is pretty cool. lacking a little soul but awesome that he has a passion for world music and culture.

2 [REPLY](#)



**Indred Cold** 1 year ago

YOU turned something Sacred into a 'show'.

2 [REPLY](#)



**Steve Akino** 2 years ago

oh lord. Yal see the veins coming out of his neck? he trying real hard to beat that drum. more like the drum is beating him. ain't no proverbs coming out of that drum o!

1 [REPLY](#)



**paapakobe** 1 year ago

He made a good effort in studying and sharing but he couldn't even say the word SLAVERY.. during which across the Caribbean and US drums were banned. Saying "the new world" and not mentioning slavery is a cop-out and acknowledgement of Columbus' fraudulence. It's great to have passion, but to play African music, one also needs rhythm... not just beats & off-beats. He should at least have a Yoruba drummer in the mix. I'm actually disappointed that this met my worst expectation.. still in this decade. That's the sad part.

3 [REPLY](#)



2

**PandaTurtle** 1 year ago

This is 100% cringe i can not deny that.

👍 3    🗨️    [REPLY](#)

**pink9jablush** 2 years ago

cultural thief! you have to keep an eye on these white people.... they come in saying they want to learn but they are really up to no good

👍 12    🗨️    [REPLY](#)

[View 2 replies](#) ▾

**Showman** 2 years ago

Nice exposition of the Yoruba musical instruments, Good job Dr. I also commend your attempt with the combination, but the guy on Omele handled it well!

👍 4    🗨️    [REPLY](#)

**sule shangodoyin** 2 years ago

The shows is very good and it's good to have passion in the arts! It's me, Sule Shangodoyin.

👍 4    🗨️    [REPLY](#)

[View reply](#) ▾

**Abu Yesufu-Eke** 2 months ago

Nonsense a complete joke

👍 1    🗨️    [REPLY](#)

**widerling** 3 months ago

No bro...just no!

👍 1    🗨️    [REPLY](#)

**Zannnnnah** 2 years ago

Its ok folks....I have interpreted what the drums are saying in this piece. They are all shouting "HELP US!" LMAOOO I can't!



**Jagger Brenko** 1 year ago

music starts at [9:50](#)

2 [REPLY](#)

**Westcool** 2 years ago

Amazing

1 [REPLY](#)

[View reply](#)

**yoop cast** 3 years ago

i don die

13 [REPLY](#)

[View 4 replies](#)



**Cevin Tyler** 3 years ago

First view

1 [REPLY](#)



**Moyo Ojo** 2 years ago

WTF is this?

3 [REPLY](#)

[View reply](#)



**Habeebah Muse** 5 days ago

proud to be yoruba

[REPLY](#)



but every day we buy american' s stars song , we travel every year to learn other people's languages and behaviors and when somebody come to take our own that we leave to promote it, we start talking rubbish..

[Read more](#)



[REPLY](#)



**James Lee** 5 months ago

WAKANDA FOREVAAAAAAA!!!!!!



[REPLY](#)



**Nuridin Adams** 1 year ago

Thank you sir for your effort in bringing gangan, ilu, omole and shkere to the west. Olohun ama ranyin lowo o pelu awon omo yin o,ashe lagbara olodumare.



[REPLY](#)



**Tho Lar** 3 months ago

Beautiful, Thank you for taking the time to present this.



[REPLY](#)



**Yeshua Excel** 7 months ago

Good exposure of Yoruba Culture and Music.



[REPLY](#)



**Mike Salami** 1 year ago

Amazing research with superb acuracy! I am from Ayan tribe and its like he lives with us! Welldone



[REPLY](#)



**ThePizzaFarmer** 4 months ago (edited)

I think theres an Indian version of the talking drum



[REPLY](#)



mentioned tradition , but with instrumentation / instruments from the Yoruba music tradition (the bassoon being the only exception). I also greatly appreciate the fact that you allocated some time in explaining to the audience about the origin and cultural tradition of the

**Read more**

[REPLY](#)

**Yorùbá Lessons with Adérónké** 4 months ago

Why?

[REPLY](#)

**Lolu Oresgun** 6 months ago

It's called FUSION, you haters (of any skin color).

[REPLY](#)

**Boozaal m** 2 months ago

So is it a dun dun or an eyaloo? lol

[REPLY](#)

**Azula** 5 months ago

TedTalk....What is you doing baby? He's can't even pronounce yoruba right.

[REPLY](#)

**Suleman Alowooja** 1 year ago

Excellent Piece of work.. You have made yet another Ile-Ife person proud..

[REPLY](#)

**CurtisBooksMusic** 6 months ago

Nothing says TedX like a bunch of white guys talking about African drumming.

[REPLY](#)